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ABSTRACT

This case study examined the North American Higher Education Cooperation (NAHEC) initiative from its launch in 1992 by educators and the governments of Canada, Mexico, and the United States through 1996, focusing on organizational, process, and actor preference "zones of influence" in international collaboration. Interviews were conducted with 13 participants who served on various committees or bodies involved in the NAHEC initiative. In regard to organization, the analysis focuses on organization type, size, and form, along with funding and political issues. In regard to process, the analysis focuses on leadership, structural equity, and decision making. Looking at the NAHEC initiative from an actor preference viewpoint, analysis centers on levels of interest, implementation, and individual orientations. Differences in all three areas among the Canadian, Mexican, and United States participants are discussed. Appendixes contain the names of NAHEC steering committee and trilateral task force members, as well as the names and affiliations of the study's participants. (Contains 18 references.) (MDM)

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North American Higher Education Cooperation:

Findings from Recent Research in Mexico, Canada, the United States

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Introduction

This case study research focuses on a four-year span (1992-1996) of the North American Higher Education Cooperation (NAHEC) initiative,[1] a higher education collaborative launched in 1992 by educators and the governments of Mexico, Canada, and the United States.[2] Since education is traditionally a domestic rather than international function of countries, when it was begun this initiative quietly broke new ground in the three countries' higher education policy. It was an innovation from previously existing higher education collaboration activities in that 1) it extended bilateral relationships through its insistence on the concurrent participation of representatives from the three countries in jointly-developed projects, and 2) it incorporated both macro (governmental) and micro (epistemic educator community) actors in the process.

Methodology

Interviews with U.S., Mexican, and Canadian participants in the collaboration initiative (see Appendixes A and B) were the primary method for gathering data. In all, thirteen participants were interviewed, of whom six were Mexican participants, five were Canadian participants, and two were participants from the United States. This national distribution of interviewees reflected a desire to focus attention on those countries (Mexico and Canada) with which U.S. higher education researchers, including me, had the least familiarity. Explicitly, a primary goal of the research was to achieve greater understanding of the Mexican perspective on North American higher education collaboration while also triangulating results with the responses of U.S. and Canadian participants. Of the thirteen persons interviewed, three persons--one from each country--had government (macro) level involvement in the initiative.

In addition to interviewing participants to obtain information about the collaboration

project, relevant education and policy documents were reviewed. These included those directly produced as a result of the activities of the collaborative and others which were less directly related to the issues under study. During the research, I also attended the third of three trilateral meetings of the initiative, spent three months speaking to participants and conducting research in Mexico, and traveled to multiple sites in Canada and the United States for the same purpose.

Existing International Collaboration Research

There is little research on international collaboration in education and what research on international collaboration exists is wide-ranging and diverse in focus and approach. Elsewhere, I have contended that the wide-ranging approaches nonetheless suggests that three fundamentally important aspects of collaboration have to do with how projects are **organized**, which decisions and other **processes** are utilized during collaboration, and which expressed or implied interests are enacted by the participating **actors**. I have conceived these as *organization*, *process*, and *actor preferences* "zones of influence"[3] in international collaboration. Figure 1 below illustrates how the "zones of influence" framework reconceptualizes approaches suggested by Helen Milner (1992), who discusses "hypotheses" about collaboration, and Charles Lipson (1991), whose focus is on the formal and informal nature of collaborative products. This relationship of the zones of influence of international collaboration to the Milner and Lipson organizing schemes is illustrated in Figure 1.

It is important to note that in the research conducted, these three dimensions of international cooperation were viewed as interactive and mutually-influencing rather than as discrete and autonomous "zones of influence" on international collaboration (for more, see Oliva, 1998b). A central premise of the research is that because they mutually construct what happens

in the collaborative, the zones cannot meaningfully be studied in isolation.

Research Questions

This research was conducted to determine how the zones individually or in relation to each other influenced what transpired in the NAHEC. The following key questions guided research on the collaboration initiative:

1. What are the *organization*, *process*, and *actor preference* zones that have been activated through this international higher education collaboration initiative involving the countries and representatives of Mexico, the United States, and Canada?
2. How did the form of these zones come to be determined, i.e., during the pre-Task Force discussions (macro level) or as part of the work of the Task Force (micro or macro levels)?
3. What is/are the one or several Mexican discourses of preference for international higher education collaboration in general and for North American higher education collaboration in particular?
4. How have the Mexican discourses of preference and the zones of influence constituted or constrained the collaborative initiative as a whole?
5. Using the products and collaborative outcomes of the Task Force as markers of authoritative discourse, how are any identified Mexican discourses reflected in those outcomes? Can it be said that preferred discourses were refracted by the zones of influence and by the preferences of other countries (macro) and their representatives(micro)?
6. And finally, what are the implications of this study in terms of a) any identified Mexican perspectives on international higher education collaboration; and b) how future international higher education collaboration initiatives involving Mexico can be arranged to favorably dispose

them for success?

Organizing Schemes for International Collaboration

Hypotheses (Milner)	Zones of Influence (Oliva)	Agreement (Lipson)
Number of Actors Hypothesis International Regimes Hypothesis	Organization	Informal Agreement or Formal Agreement
Iteration Hypothesis Power Asymmetries Hypothesis	Process	
Gains and Reciprocity Hypothesis Epistemic Community Hypothesis	Actor Preferences	

Figure 1. "Zones of Influence in International Collaboration" in relation to Milner's "hypotheses" and Lipson's "agreements" organizing schemes.

Findings

Organization Zone

The first theoretical zone of the Zones of Influence in International Collaboration is the "Organization" zone, in which the types, size, and form of organizations that countries set up for their collaborative work are considered.

Organization Type

According to participants, the NAHEC did not seek nor was given the authority to impose its collaborative decisions on the educational systems of the individual countries. In one interview, a U. S. participant described the lack of formal authority of the initiative vis-a-vis educational policy in the three countries:

US: I can't take . . . [4]If the Task Force came up with recommendations for

> what the federal governments should do, I can*not* actualize that unless it is consistent with the federal government's overall thrust.
>
> Me: [. . . .] It seems to me that part of the reason you can't necessarily take recommendations of this Task Force back and actualize them immediately is because this is not really a formally constituted organization.
>
> US: Yes. It's not governmental, in that respect. Let me use an opposite example. We do a fair amount of work with the EU now, with the European Union. The European Union, if they make a decision to do something, that can be binding. They are now a governmental structure, and they can make a decision to do something without, basically, getting the approval of all of their nation-states.
>
> Me:. (To confirm) The Parliament does that.
>
> US: Yes, they have the capacity to do that. *This* group has no standing, if you will, with any of the three governments that's dealing. (US, I-7)

Rather than operate as an 'institution' (Vasquez & Mansbach, 1984), the NAHEC organization since 1992 functioned as a voluntary forum for the consideration of North American higher education issues. Since the forum itself did not impose decisions on member-countries, it can be said that the organization promoted and encouraged certain behaviors and supportd particular events, but did not itself take actions. The in-country implementation of actions agreed upon in NAHEC was left to the voluntary action of participant-actors within their countries.

One could ask, then, what kind of a role this kind of regime (Krasner, 1982, cited in Rosenau, 1986, p. 880) and its related mechanisms (conferences, projects, meetings, forms) play in encouraging desirable actions. As indicated in his interview and repeated below, one Canadian participant who offered a "false close" fundraising metaphor to describe the purpose of trilateral meetings, a key mechanism of the NAHEC "regime."

> CN: . . . it does *se*veral things. One, it provides an opportunity for what may be called "false closes." [. . . .] say you're a donor and you get in a

> discussion with me for some time as to whether or not you'll support a particular project. It seems likely that you will, you have expressed some interest in it, but the discussions drag on and on and on. So what you do is set up then a false close. You find some particular occasion and you say, "On this occasion we'll have this public event." Now, the event may be something unrelated ex*act*ly to you. Then we say to you, this is a *won*derful opportunity for you to get profile, ok? But you *have* to make a decision by this date, or else it can't get into the program. [. . . .] So this is called a false close, because it isn't really the close. Actually, all the details may be worked out *af*ter the fact, but it forces you into a public commitment.
>
> In a similar type of thing, what these meetings do in my opinion at least at one level, is they provide a kind of false close. (CN, VI-98)

Considered in this way, the governmental purpose of NAHEC and its mechanisms is to bring people together to talk about and consider possible actions, especially actions for which there is already some support.

It is not surprising given the "false close" explanation for the initiative's actions that participants sometimes distinguished between two varieties of programmatic innovation that were possible for NAHEC. The first and more ideal was an innovation conceived, organized, and proposed trilaterally and funded at the program level without the interfering constraints of national issues. The second was an innovation carved out of existing national programs and coordinated by and between the three countries.

For example, one NAHEC project with strong trilateral support was the North American Distance Education and Research Network (NADERN), a telecommunications linkage project designed to technologically bring North American students, educators, researchers, and policy-makers together on a wide range of issues. Talking specifically about NADERN, one participant spoke with regret about NAHEC's inability to transcend national constraints to launch the project. The regret was especially strong given that many participants had considered NADERN

both a concept with high potential to positively impact Mexico-Canada-U. S. relations (a founding NAHEC objective) and one in which working group members had been especially diligent and effective. A Mexican participant states:

> MX: Well, that didn't fly. That would have necessitated a serious, serious amount of money. And it was probably the most creative initiative and also it was possibly the most diversified in terms of the participating . . . or the stakeholders. At some point you had Northern Telecom and AT&T and the universities and the academics involved. And the rectors of course and the policy people.
>
> [. . .] The way that other initiatives are mounted, you could have probably hired four or five experts full-time and paid them the money needed to develop this thing. We could have jointly gone to the World Bank for funding. We could have done a lot of things, . . . (MX, I-38)

From the perspective of this participant, this truly trilateral project might have succeeded in generating outside (fourth-party) funding. Instead, the countries' and participants' inability to agree on promoting it aggressively at a trilateral level forced the project to compete for resources within nations' internal priorities and ultimately shelved the trilateral project.

One key aspect related to organization types bears repeating. In talking about the work of the NAHEC, a U. S. participant says, "We've established the agenda, we've created the network, we have a plan, and the plan is more of a vision, if you will, than it is an action plan. Because the people who have to act on it aren't really parts of this" (US, VIII-3). Thus, because NAHEC's organizational type was that of an informal 'regime,' its predominant field of action was not the trilateral regime itself, but the education domains of the individual countries.

Organization Size

We know from the theoretical literature that international collaboration of any kind involves at least two nation-states (Dosser, Gowland & Hartley, 1982; Milner, 1992) that I

represent here as (1 + 1). The literature also tells us that each additional country makes agreement increasingly difficult and less likely (Oye, 1986). One reason for this is that the integrative potential (Underdal, 1987) or bargaining surplus (Young, 1991), defined as the area of overlap in which each country's needs can be met, narrows and becomes increasingly difficult to find as more countries become involved.

With respect to the number of countries involved in NAHEC, there is a closed membership composed of the three countries in North America: Mexico, the United States, and Canada. What is interesting about the case being studied is that even at only three countries (1+1+1), collaboration is complicated by bilateral side agreements (see Grieco, 1990 and Snidal, 1991) and by the formation of bloc coalitions.

In the case of NAHEC, bloc coalitions occurred one way when there was a shared interest between two countries and a benign or non-conflictive stance on the issue from the third (1+1//1). It occurred a second way when there was disagreement among the countries and two countries pressured, convinced, or outflanked the third (2 vs. 1) to obtain a desired outcome.

For example, in the interview data several NAHEC projects were presented as having been driven principally by bilateral (1 + 1//1) rather than trilateral interests (1 + 1 + 1). Depending on the speaker, examples of more bilateral than trilateral interests could include student mobility, NADERN, and university-business linkages. A general description of this bilateral tendency was provided by a Mexican participant:

> MX: I think we were not able, none of the participants, to develop initiatives attractive to the three countries simultaneously.
>
> Me: Not even what is on the agenda? Because I assume . . .

> MX: No. The issues on the agenda are attractive *sometimes* bilaterally. But they weren't able to be attractive trilaterally. I use the example of mobility: Student mobility is attractive to Canada and is attractive to Mexico.[5] It is not attractive to the United States [. . . .]
>
> If we talk about sustainable development, I think that could be an initiative that would interest the United States and Canada, but in Mexico it is an initiative that would only interest a few, mostly research groups. The largest groups in Mexico are too concerned with questions of survival and with very basic problems to worry about whether you can have development that is at the same time sustainable, that won't harm the ecology, and not effect [. . . .] The large groups in Mexico have more urgent, more basic problems. And not the problems that affect the United States and Canada. (MX, I-25)[6]

An example of the (2 vs. 1) bilateral alliance occurred when Mexico and Canada pushed for the third trilateral meeting despite U. S. reservations (for a fuller description, see Oliva, 1997, pps. 168-169). In different ways, however, both kinds of bilateral alliances (1+ 1//1 or 2 vs. 1) interfere with the development of truly joint (1 + 1 + 1) goals and objectives. As will be discussed later, the NAHEC propensity for bilateral rather than trilateral interests implies either inattention, in this regime-based collaborative, to decision-making processes and the manner in which country interests were presented and negotiated, or the greater salience of actor preference issues manifested through the initiative.

Organizational Form

In addition to type and size , the third key distinguishing characteristic of collaborative organizations is the form through which countries engage in collaboration. Theorists of international collaboration think about collaborative organizations as having federated, functional, or community form (see Mutimer, 1994).

The North American Higher Education Cooperation initiative is explicitly about higher

education collaboration between Mexico, the United States, and Canada. Because the purpose of the NAHEC is to cover one (higher education) rather than many functional areas of countries' interaction, the NAHEC could best be described as a functional international organization. However, in keeping with the ideas of neo-functionalists, international collaboratives like NAHEC are subject to the "spillover" (Mutimer, 1994) of nation-states' domestic issues into the higher educational functional domain in which they are collaborating. For this reason, issues grounded in nation-states circumstances must always inform analyses of international collaborative ventures.

Spillover

As discussed by Mutimer (1994), neo-functionalist theorists of international collaboration contend that individual countries cannot ever shield themselves from the effects of internal pressures and constraints and that these sometimes "spill over" into international collaboration. This aspect of functional organizations is particularly salient for NAHEC. However, theorists do not qualify domestic spillover influencers on international collaboratives as those having either only positive or only negative effects. It follows and is assumed here that the circumstances of individual countries can serve as positive (reinforcing/reproductive) as well as negative (constraining) influencers on international collaboration.

Financial Spillover

Each of the three countries involved in collaboration experienced the "spillover" effect of the political and fiscal crises from 1992 until 1996 (Oliva, 1997). Mexico, Canada, and the United States each underwent government retrenchment due to financial pressures from events such as the peso devaluation, and these were recognized by participants as having an effect on

NAHEC work. One of the participants described the sometimes conjoined effects of financial and political factors in the following ways:

> MX: . . . what I would hear them say is: "I don't have funding. I don't have a funding." It was always, "I don't have funding." Now, that's not to say that we held back for that reason. But what I'm trying to say is that there were times with this initiative when we would get together and we would say . . . a lot of work was presented about how there was going to be more mobility and all that, but we ended up doing things at the level of university one on one. (MX, II-59)

Another participant saw the negative effect that the lack of resources had on the success of initiative as it developed. While modest but adequate resources had been in place to get NAHEC discussions and planning started, available funds had not been nearly adequate to support identified projects.

> MX: The way that I see it, if you have funding then you can start serious business in terms of having people meet and decide what is it they want to do. That phase was covered; there was enough funding to promote that.
>
> Then the second phase, meaning money. More money to fund those initiatives. And we didn't *really*, we really didn't enter that particular phase at any point in time because the money was not ever put aside. The money was never *there*.
>
> And then the third phase would be to be highly selective and go into your megascience programs or your megamobility or your mega-whatever. (MX, II-43)

However, spillover effects from financial pressures were not the only domestic influencers to the NAHEC. A change in the political philosophy of governmental actors, some of whom no longer supported extensive service programs or prioritized social institutions like higher education also had an effect. Changes of this kind during this period were precipitated in the United States by the election of a Republican Congress when, for example, "a change in

administration" meant that "people were battling" (US, II-2). It occurred in Mexico when new demands there limited funders' discretionary authority by pulling resources away from traditional areas:

> MX: I think that (pause) there is no doubt that in Mexico political circumstances have also had a, an influence on general public opinion. . . . for example, a subject as delicate as the matter in Chiapas [. . . .] signifies for Mexico a center of attention that must be uppermost more than ever, no? (MX, I-14)

A more general example of spillover was evident during the preparation of NAHEC founding documents. For example, during one interview, I mentioned that the Wingspread Statement which established the vision for the NAHEC project, declared that North American cooperation in higher education had merit in its own right. The Mexican participant responded:

> MX: But remember there was an ob*se*ssive declaration along those lines because NAFTA was not subscribed yet.
>
> Me: Right. It hadn't been signed. And so people wanted to make sure . . . I interpreted it that people wanted to make sure that people didn't say later that "NAFTA didn't happen, so there is no need to do this."
>
> MX: No, you know what? Yes, it was related to that. But there is a more subtle thing that only by having been a participant I can repeat. The three governments and especially the Canadian government who was very skeptical about NAFTA, did not want the U. S. government or any others on their own to feel pressured, pressed by anybody to sign. They didn't want to save face in the event it *was*n't signed. But they wanted to avoid . . . and the communiqué had to be rewritten a couple of times because of that. (MX, IV-52)

Thus, while the preparation of the Wingspread Statement may have been a founding and defining moment for the trilateral higher education initiative, even it did not occur absent the spillover of other non-higher education national concerns.

NAHEC-embedded Spillover

Mutimer's (1994) discussion of spillover assumes that influencers come from the circumstances of participating nations-states that are *outside* of the work of collaboratives but influence it nonetheless. In my view, NAHEC demonstrates that spillover influences can also be incorporated into the *form* of collaborative ventures, such that they are less apparent and more subtle.

In NAHEC, this kind of incorporated spillover arises from 1) the conceptually different ways that Steering Committee members, grounded in their own agency duties, constructed their NAHEC commitments, goals, and accountabilities and 2) the different ways that item 1 was reproduced in the Task Force, a part of NAHEC that was fundamentally a creation of the Steering Committee. NAHEC did not create new institutions to coordinate the work of the initiative or hire new people to prioritize NAHEC projects above all others. Thus, an important source of embedded spillover arose out of the way that the Steering Committee members, key personnel in the implementation of NAHEC, viewed their roles.

In Mexico, for example, the Steering Committee member was an official of the SEP and viewed education as the principal reason for Mexico's involvement in NAHEC. Because of the congruence between his SEP agency responsibilities and the NAHEC functional area, there was the least embedded spillover in NAHEC from the Mexican Steering Committee member.

Given the United States' decentralized higher education system, two federal agencies with distinct foci played a role in overseeing higher education. One U. S. Task Force participant described these roles by saying,

US: The way I generally describe our [U. S.] responsibility is that [the

> Department of Education] was responsible for internationalizing Americans and USIA was responsible for Americanizing internationals. But as we get into trilateral or North American contexts, and we are trying to break down those we-they concepts, then obviously we have to work really closely together. (US, III-9)

From the beginning, the Steering Committee member from the United States was not from the Department of Education, but from the United States Information Agency. Thus, even though NAHEC participants at Wingspread suggested changes to student preparation programs through projects like the development of North American Studies, the U. S. did not appear to conceive of the collaborative in a way that would directly impact higher education curricula. If participating U. S. institutions are any indication, they viewed it in the more traditional (for them) terms as the recruitment of foreign students or the enhancement of exchange programs.

> MX: . . . Texas was very proactive. New Mexico, Arizona. Then the smaller ones, the private institutions, colleges that very quickly discovered that there was nothing much for them in this game.
>
> Me: Nothing much in terms of funding or in terms of relationships?
>
> MX: Well, what they wanted to do was to attract students, basically. [. . .] They didn't really want to pursue anything beyond recruiting.
>
> Me: So they viewed it as an extension of maybe incipient programs (phone rings) in international exchange or something?
>
> MX: Yes. Exactly. Continuing education. A few of them had moneymaker programs that . . . some of them flew for a while. (MX, I-35)

The Steering Committee member from Canada was at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). Given a broad foreign affairs and business orientation, it is not surprising that the Canadian Steering Committee member either quickly forgot or perhaps never really espoused the functional NAHEC emphasis on higher education.

> CN: And we have not been effective for our part in that sense in having the Foreign Ministry [in Mexico] or others seeming to awaken the Education Ministry there to the fact that this is more than the Education Ministry there to the fact that this is more than an education mission, for example. [A] Relations issue. Another thing that this ties into is trade and other considerations which, since [. . .] [the NAHEC initiative is] in a Foreign Ministry here, people are sort of conscious of, by nature. But since [the Mexican Steering Committee member]'s in an education ministry, it might not necessarily take hold. Nor will they necessarily feel that's their job anyway [emphasis added]. (CN, I-85)

Thus, nationally-oriented agency emphases were embedded in the NAHEC through the distinct Steering Committee members' orientations, and these spilled over into the collaborative initiative. These emphases involved assumptions about which students were (primarily, not exclusively) to be served and about which domains are to be addressed through the collaborative. The differing emphases are summarized heuristically in Table 1.

Table 1.

Embedded Spillover: Steering Committee Assumptions

	Student and Functional Domains	
Country	Students to be Served	Domains to be Addressed
Mexico	Native students	All education domains
Canada	Native and Foreign students	Foreign Affairs through Higher Ed.
United States	Foreign students	Higher Educ./Research Exchange

Because the NAHEC was a 'regime' without constitutional standing and not a separate and autonomous international institution, the different agendas and purposes of the Secretaría de Educación Pública (Mexico), the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (Canada), and United States Information Agency (United States) were instantiated and unresolved in this encounter. Without a means of resolving or collaboratively transcending these

embedded differences, participants at this level worked at subtle cross purposes, perhaps even unknowingly.

Given this orientation among Steering Committee members, the Task Force constructed by them also reflected different assumptions. The Mexican Task Force was made up of (with one temporary exception) education officials and leaders. U. S. Task Force members were primarily educators as well, although some reportedly had little familiarity with Mexico and international education. Canadians, on the other hand, thought of the Task Force as a conglomeration of various stakeholder groups--including business--that were part of their broader vision of North American cooperation (see Appendix B). One Canadian Task Force member even expressed surprise that Mexico and the United States did not have more 'representative' Task Forces:

> CN: . . . we thought about who we should have on the Canadian panel. And we were a bit surprised when we first met, because we had thought it through and we had a more broadly representative group than the Americans. Or, I think, the Mexicans.
>
> We had someone from industry. We had someone from the foundation world, and we had someone who wasn't a university person. [. . . .] And as well we had someone from Francophone Canada. I think the Americans were astonished to find an industry rep on the Canadian committee and so were the Mexicans.
>
> Me: Well, the Mexicans were mostly governmental representatives, weren't they?
>
> CN: And institutional. (CN, III-271)

In summary, although traditional discussions of spillover assume that influencers come from outside of international collaboratives, NAHEC demonstrated that spillover can also be embedded in or incorporated into them. Thus, spillover effects on collaboratives are not just

spillover 'into' international collaboratives, but can also be spillover embedded 'through' collaborative structures.

Process Zone

The second major "zone of Influence" for international collaboration, the Process Zone, accounts for the kinds of leadership and decision-making that is enacted in collaboration. This includes considering whether the collaborative has an integrationist bias. An integrationist bias is assumed in much of the research having to do with the European Economic Community, a supranational organization with sovereign authority over nation-states.

Leadership

Young (1991) rethinks traditional concepts of power and hegemonic leadership by positing that international collaboratives exhibit three kinds of leadership: structural, entrepreneurial, and intellectual. Structural leaders are those that have such a command of needed resources that they can force agreement when it might not otherwise occur. Entrepreneurial leaders are active participants in collaboration who are able to take distinct national interests and identify the potential for agreement. This kind of leadership is particularly important when issues are new and not already well understood. Finally, intellectual leaders are not usually at the collaborative table, but develop information and ideas that shape integrative potential and collaborative solutions (Young, 1991, p. 294-300) over time.

It was never the case at the beginning of the NAHEC initiative that any one group had such an overwhelming command of resources that they could be considered a Structural Leader. The United States was closest to filling this role and indeed was perceived by Mexicans as a structural leader because of the large size of its higher education system, especially in proportion

to Mexico's (Ojeda, Laforest & Pacheco, 1992). But the lack of a Structural Leader is evident in and perhaps constructed by the 'Structural Equity' that was incorporated into the NAHEC.

Structural Equity

'Structural Equity' can be seen in the numerical equality of participants in the Wingspread meeting (20 each); by equal participation of the three countries in the development of papers distributed prior to the Wingspread meeting (1 each); in the equal representation of each country on the Steering Committee (1 each), Secretariat (1 each), Task Force (6 each), and project working groups (1 TF member each); in the expectation that there would be at least one Trilateral meeting in each country; and in the effort to ensure parallel structures in each country to enable and extend North American cooperation.

One example of the effort to create parallel structures is Mexico's Centro de Nuevas Estrategias Tecnológicas (Center for New Technology Strategies/CENET) (CN, VII-39). The CENET was created with the help of SEP consultants so that the Canadian Corporate-Higher Education Forum and the United States' Business-Higher Education Forum would have a parallel organization in Mexico with which to work. Its purpose was to serve "as a counterpart for respective Canadian and U. S. fora in the general context of the NAFTA, [. . .] connected to the disparity of Mexican businesses and institutions, in their linkage processes, with respect to their colleagues from the North" (CN, IV-68). The structural equity demonstrated by CENET and NAHEC groups did not always correspond to equal participation, influence, or to consistent good will (as evidenced by Steering Committee minutes and co-researchers' own statements). It does, however, help to explain the collaborative's evident deemphasis of Structural Leadership.

Regarding 'entrepreneurial leaders,' Young (1991) says that this category of leaders sets

agendas, draws popular attention to issues, invents innovative policy options, and serves as deal-making broker when options are under consideration (Young, 1991, p. 294). More so than Structural Leadership, Entrepreneurial Leadership more closely characterized the leadership in NAHEC. Much of the activity and many outcomes and products of the initiative such as the three trilateral meetings, the post-Wingspread report called Identifying the Agenda and the post-Vancouver report called Implementing the Agenda, address key entrepreneurial activities.

The final category of leadership is defined by Young (1991) as intellectual leadership. This leadership category has to do with generating ideas about international collaboration that are subsequently incorporated into Structural and Entrepreneurial leaders' collaborative work.

Although not entirely lacking, intellectual leadership was not emphasized in the initiative. The discussion papers for Wingspread can be thought of as an attempt to insert Intellectual Leadership at the founding stages of the new initiative. However, despite that the four papers were valuable in establishing a common ground and starting point for the discussions at Wingspread, they seem to have had more of a planning and management purpose. One Canadian participant at the Wingspread meeting described the discussion papers by saying,

> CN: . . . at Wingspread the papers were presented. I don't think they were seen as absolutely *cen*tral, but rather as suitable foundations for some of the discussion. You know, they were not that original. [. . . .] they were quite competent, but they were not compelling. (CN, VI-67).

As described in Steering Committee minutes (Oliva, 1997), paper topics had actually been chosen by Steering Committee members and paper drafts were reviewed and amended by them.

Apart from this involvement of academics in the Wingspread meeting, Intellectual Leadership was incorporated into NAHEC only indirectly.[10] Several international organizations

independent of NAHEC were themselves developing research and getting together to meet--sometimes regularly--to discuss similar issues.[3] While not part of NAHEC, these organizations and their events were attended by several NAHEC members and participation in those events deepened their knowledge of related issues.

Decision-Making

The zones of influence in international collaboration model assumes that decision-making--or the ways that participants decide on outcomes-- are important process dimensions of international collaboration. Theoretical literature points out that whether decision-making is done using consensus, majority, and proportional or equitable representation makes a difference in the determination of outcomes.

In talking to NAHEC participants, however, it became apparent that they rarely thought about and were not concerned about procedures governing decision-making. Some of them could not even remember how key NAHEC decisions were made, including some in which they participated. Even members at the Task Force Level tended not to have a clear idea of how or why their country became involved in NAHEC to begin with.

> MX: . . . I think there was a conversation between important people in Canada, the United States, and Mexico, including important academics like the President of UNAM, people from the Department of Education in Washington, or some important universities. (MX, II-31)

In discussing the processes by which key outcomes like agendas and project goals were established, they seemed to value the opportunity to provide input through discussion, rather than concern themselves with which decision-making procedures governed the final outcomes of those discussions.

> MX: It was a process of discussion, of analysis. And really of consensus about which were the most important points in all of the three countries. And we decided on the four most important points. [. . . .] In other words, there wasn't a . . . it was a very open, very free discussion. And then they got started on projects. (MX, II-18)

Even if participants were forced to choose from among alternative choices in a context of disagreement, they were not concerned about and did not give a lot of thought to decision-making rules or processes.

> Me: When there were disagreements about what to do, how did you resolve those as a group?
>
> CN: Oh, you talk them out. Maybe move to a lowest common denominator. I mean, we were not looking to adjudicate differences. We were looking to do the best out of the challenge that had been given. (CN, II-121)

The term "lowest common denominator," though unflattering, indicates that participants did not spend a lot of time on issues that were controversial to any of the three contingents. At the same time, however, and as we have seen from the section on spillover, some items became part of the NAHEC because two contingents were in favor of it while the third had a neutral response (1 +1 / 1).

All of this indicates that both governmental (macro) and institutional (micro) higher education participants depend on personal negotiation skills and judgment more than on pre-established national agendas or rules about how decisions are made. Participants tended to state that generally, "everyone spoke out of good will" (MX, II-176), which made it possible to simply "talk things out." We have already noted that participants in the NAHEC tended to exert entrepreneurial leadership. The kind of rules-free, non-institutionalized decision-making environment described above is congruent with the exercise of entrepreneurial leadership. It

privileges participants who have good verbal and interpersonal skills; clear understandings and judgments about national, agency, and personal interests; and the entrepreneurial ability to identify "bargaining surplus." Participants with these skills or who were also able to cross boundaries because of cultural or linguistic proficiencies were at a special advantage in this environment.

Task Force Involvement

One thing that also becomes clear is that the decision-making context under which the micro-level Task Force operated changed considerably between 1992 and 1996. Because of the size and the structure of early meetings, Task Force members and others involved in NAHEC had extensive opportunities to provide input through this "talking it out" process. As meetings became larger, Task Force members gradually lost the quality of participation at conferences and then the ability to participate at all. By the time the Guadalajara meeting had concluded, the Screening Committee had suspended the work of the Task Force entirely pending decisions about the future of the initiative. Thus, as the NAHEC initiative made its way through agendas and projects it become more closely linked with national (macro) interests and the involvement of institutional (micro) participants declined. Some reasons for this have already been discussed in the earlier section on "spillover;" others will be discussed under Actor Preferences.

Process Summary

In summary a look at the "Process" features of the NAHEC initiative reveals that 'Structural Equity' incorporated into the initiative minimized the importance of Structural Leadership and that Entrepreneurial Leadership was the most salient leadership type in this emerging and not well known international higher education collaboration and policy arena.

Decision-making in this executive-level and entrepreneurially-oriented group was done through verbal negotiation and personal judgment rather than through accepted rules and unspoken "lowest common denominator" and "good will" orientations among decision-makers privileged uncontroversial and traditional projects. Notwithstanding "Structural Equity," a hierarchy of power allowed the Steering Committee to control whether the Task Force was active or not.

Actor Preferences Zone

Much of the research on international collaboration assumes a statist orientation (Rosenau, 1986). That is, it assumes that international collaboration is implicitly about nation-states' agendas, with collaborative participants simply negotiating within the parameters of national preferences. Rosenau, among others, critiques this assumption and urges that we move back and forth from macro to micro levels to study international collaboratives and their products. Other researchers (Schmuck, 1991) have pointed to representatives of the European Parliament to show that even those statist-oriented actors enact outcomes that reflect personal rather than international (supranational) commitments (Schmuck, 1991).

Levels of Interest

The Zones of Influence in International Collaboration model used with this study neiher assumes a solely macro nor solely micro orientation for participants and actors. It encourages researchers to consider both macro and micro levels of work and to look especially at the interaction (Rosenau, 1986) of the two. In the NAHEC initiative, Steering Committee members are taken to act as the macro level of interest for the initiative while the Task Force is taken as the micro level of interest.

Following a statist orientation, one assumption that could be made about the NAHEC is

that the macro-level Steering Committee enacted and negotiated national interests while the micro-level Task Force focused on implementation. Or as one participant put it, that the Task Force was not designed to and could not develop policy for the three countries because the policy role belonged instead to the Steering Committee.

> US: The Task Force is a self . . . a self-perpetuating force. That is, it selects its own membership. [. . . .] By and large. Or it solicits it own membership. There isn't any legal basis in government for that. That makes it very difficult. Government can participate in something like that, but they can't be captives of something like that. Because the government has to ultimately set its own policies. (US, I-2)

Nevertheless, the distinctions between the policy-making and implementation roles of the Steering Committee (macro level) and Task Force (micro level), respectively, are not as clear in NAHEC as this speaker would have them appear. The Wingspread Declaration and the Vancouver Communiqué, for example, are products of micro and macro-level interaction. Although both conferences were structured largely by the Steering Committee, recommendations arising from them were not entirely anticipated and sometimes developed out of the interaction of both levels. For example, although the Steering Committee had specific projects in mind during the planning of these conferences,[14] other projects were suggested and placed on the NAHEC agenda by Wingspread and Vancouver participants. Several projects, such as developing North American Studies and the North American Distance Education and Research Network, had not been foreseen when government (macro) representatives met alone. These innovative projects were creative adaptations that incorporated micro-level educational/academic interests to the macro-level frame of action.

Because the initiative lacked constitutional status and assignable resources, the Steering

Committee also could not implement NAHEC on its own. Steering Committee members could not hire employees to coordinate, manage, and implement the initiative, and this may have given the Task Force more influence than they would otherwise have had. In a resource-poor environment partly resulting from the collaborative's 'regime' status, Task Force members (except in the case of Mexico) participated at their own expense and largely because of a personal or organizational interest in the issues covered by NAHEC. They exercised high levels of autonomy and independence in their work, in exchange for which they helped to develop ideas for North Americanization of higher education in the three countries. Thus, they helped to shape NAHEC projects through their participation, and were complicit in but not controlled by governmental actors during the implementation of NAHEC projects.

However, during implementation both governmental (macro) and Task Force (micro) actions were influenced in ways that they seemed not to take into account. Two macro level preferences that influenced the Task Force's ability to function were: 1) the national structure of higher education in each country and 2) the implementation strategies enacted by Steering Committee (macro) members within those individual countries.

Implementation

Lipson (1991) defines formal and informal implementation of international collaboratives based on whether they have constitutional standing within the countries. An illustration of this in North America would be the formal North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which is recognized by the three governments as something they are committed by agreement and bound by legislation to enact. The North American Higher Education Cooperation initiative (NAHEC) was never formalized in this sense. However, its implementation in the three countries extended

over a continuum from mostly informal to mostly formal.

When asked if implementation had been formal or informal in their country, one participant had difficulty discussing that and resorted to talking about the value of the NAHEC for Mexico (MX, VI-61). Another, basing his comments on assumptions about Canadian higher education structure and practice, denied that implementation of the NAHEC collaborative and its implementation within the country had any impact on higher education there.

> Me: In reference to the initiative, would you say that it has a formal or informal role in the educational policy of the three countries?
>
> CN: Oh, I don't think it could be said to have a role in educational policy in Canada. To start with, educational policy in Canada is strictly a provincial matter. [. . . .] . . . in most federal countries, including Germany and Australia, education is *not* a matter for the federal government, but in most countries, the federal governments have invaded jurisdiction. [. . . .] In Canada, we have a looser federation and the provinces are much more aggressive in defending their turf, and there has never been an office in Ottawa with the name "Education" on the door. That is, a government office. (CN, I-118)

Comments from U. S. participants reflected a predilection in that country to informal implementation.

> Me: So how do things get done?
>
> US: Good ideas can get done. I mean, it doesn't take formal structure to get good ideas adopted. Uh, in fact *I* would argue that a formal structure gets in the way. (US, II-6)

Only the Mexican participants were able to clearly state that implementation in their country was situated toward the formal end of the implementation continuum. In responding to a question about implementation, this speaker appears also to discover that implementation in Canada and the United States did not occur in the same way that it did in Mexico:

> MX: . . . this office [SEP]. . . had a highly visible role. So it was. . . it was *for*mally pursued, I think, and processed, and funded. Whatever was funded really went through that office.
>
> Me: Ok. Could the same be said for the other countries? In *your* view.
>
> MX: You know, I have a very nebulous perception of what happened in Canada. I believe that in Canada what you had was a very *for*mal promotion, pretty much like in Mexico, but with the difference that the Canadian higher education system is *really* decentralized. [. . . .]
>
> And in the U.S. I think they were very much . . . it was more informal. Inconsistency with the kind of profile on governance that the U.S. institutions have. Although at a certain point in time both AUCC and [. . . .] ACE, the American Council on Education and . . . NAFSA. Both agencies started promoting linkages with Mexico but in a very . . .That's interesting. Your question is interesting because the pattern of the promotion was totally different. (MX, I-37)

Clearly, NAHEC participants from the three countries differed in their view of how implementation should take place and was taking place in the different countries. These differences became apparent only after comparing the implementation from a position outside of any one national context. Yet, this awareness alone does not provide us with an adequate explanation for the differences.

Making Sense of Implementation

To make sense of NAHEC implementation, it is important to first step back from some of the assumptions embedded in participant comments because these get in the way of a reflective assessment of what transpired. The comment by a Canadian participant about implementation in Canada, for example, reflects the accepted Canadian view regarding provincial rather than federal jurisdiction and authority over higher education. Notwithstanding those comments, it is clear that the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), the federal lead NAHEC agency in Canada, was very involved and clearly instrumental in promoting an

internationalization agenda for Canadian higher education, even if that agenda was legitimated and buttressed by their own Foreign Policy Review (MacEachen & Gauthier, 1994). That they did so in a politic way acceptable within Canadian tradition and with the support of Canadian higher education leaders is much to their credit. But it does not negate the Canadian federal intervention into higher education and higher education policy development in this case.

The comments from Mexicans indicate that their implementation was coordinated and centralized and that for this reason it was considered formal. The comment from the United States epitomizes that country's view that NAHEC does not have a formal role in the higher education activities of the United States.

Taken together, these differing views do not make it possible to neatly conclude, as Lipson would have one do, that implementation was either informal or formal. Rather, a different approach seems in order, especially given that NAHEC is a collaborative that operates without constitutional standing.

One approach to analyzing the overall implementation of NAHEC is to consider both the structure of higher education in the three countries (first macro preference indicator) and the implementation strategies used there (second macro preference indicator) to create a matrix that situates each country's implementation among a number of possibilities. The process of arriving at each country's situated implementatio is covered in Tables 2, 3, and 4.

Based on what we know, we can safely say that: Mexico has a strongly centralized higher education structure and has taken a strongly formal approach to NAHEC; Canada has a highly decentralized structure and has taken a strongly formal approach to the initiative, and finally; the United States has a weakly decentralized higher education system and has taken a strongly

informal approach to NAHEC.

Table 2.

National Higher Education Structure

	Mexico	Canada	United States
Centralized* +/-	X+		
Decentralized +/-		X+	X-

*Defined by whether there is a federal higher education coordinating agency or other presence
+ = strong - = weak

Table 3.

NAHEC Coordination within Countries*

	Mexico	Canada	United States
Formal +/-	X+	X+	
Informal +/-			X+

*Assumes there is no constitutional standing along integrationist (EU) lines
+ = strong - = weak

The convergence of the two characteristics for the three countries can then be displayed visually as indicated in Table 4. That matrix takes into account and allows us to consider both the higher education structure of individual countries and the coordination mechanisms chosen within them. Applying it to NAHEC makes it possible for us to begin to understand the broader implementation context in which micro-level Task Force participants had to conduct their work. It quickly becomes apparent in this way that despite significant differences in their structures of education, Mexico's implementation had more in common with Canada's than with implementation in the United States.

The incongruence displayed here is a possible explanation for feelings of frustration and

disappointment occasionally expressed by Mexican TF (micro-level) participants. From the highly centralized and highly formalized perspective in Mexico, for example, Mexican Task Force members could not make sense of the U. S.'s inability and apparent lack of interest in moving projects forward. Sometimes they associated the different U. S. and Canadian approaches to a lack of resources.

> MX2: It was much more formal in Mexico. Because in Mexico there was a representative of the Secretariat for Public Education as a direct authority over universities in Mexico. So, they could say "This is going to happen." And "You have to make a commitment to this."
>
> MX1: And "We'll find the money."
>
> MX2: "We'll find the money." [. . . .] But not the United States.
>
> MX1: There was never that countenance. And Canada, well, in-between. (MX, I-44)

Table 4.

NAHEC Implementation

		COORDINATION WITHIN COUNTRY			
		Formal +	Formal -	Informal -	Informal +
STRUCTURE	Centralized +	Mexico			
	Centralized -				
	Decentralized -				United States
	Decentralized +	Canada			

Other times, they seemed to conclude that the different implementations had something to do with the culturally-different systems of organization:

> MX: [. . .] what distinguishes U. S. from Mexican bureaucracy--
> I still don't understand Canadian bureaucracy well--is that in Mexico's case, it is as complicated as in the U. S. But its lesser development, for want of a better term, allows it to be transcended at a given moment in time in order to advance more quickly. In the case of the U. S. bureaucracy, it is *very* complicated because everything has to be planned at least a year in advance. [. . . .] In the case of Mexican bureaucracy, it is ex*act*ly the same, but [. . .] we don't have to wait a year. We can transcend bureaucracy in particular moments. Neither one of them is easy. Both are very complicated and the only bad thing about U. S. bureaucracy is that you also have to tack a year on to everything. (MX, IV-26)

Several times, however, Mexican participants expressed stronger sentiments like frustration and even resentment that the U. S. was not proceeding with implementation in a manner similar to and consistent with implementation in Mexico. In my view, these micro-level Task Force members' concerns about implementation are substantially explained by the effect of differing national education structures and implementation strategies.

Cooperation/Conflict Orientation

We have already seen that participants in the NAHEC, perhaps because they had other commitments on their time and energy, in practice quickly eliminated proposals that were at all controversial. Thus, while similarity in implementation appears to have positively influenced cooperation, the concept of conflict that Vásquez and Mansbach (1984) also urge researchers to consider, is not highly salient in the initiative.

It is possible that in part the abatement of conflict was the result of a "similar" background shared by most participants; that despite being from different countries most were members of the education epistemic community. Another explanation has to do with the willingness of countries not to stand in the way of proposals for which they had no negative, but also no positive interest (1 + 1 // 1). This had the effect, as we have already discussed, that much

of the NAHEC agenda reflected more bilateral than trilateral interests.

It appeared to some participants that the prevailing good will among them might have interfered with the difficult work of moving beyond superficial interests in order to develop truly trilateral interests. It *would* have entailed some conflict and substantial hard work to move into contentious areas in order to develop better collective understandings of interests and of ways of thinking about higher education. Asked to think about these issues, one speaker spoke about the possible error of the commonly held desire to stay in a "good will" mode.

> Me: But you know that takes me back to the process through which you decided the agenda [. . . .] if they were really more bilateral interests than trilateral, then we have to ask whether the decisions weren't made in a manner that was not too well, not too well . . .
>
> MX: Thought out?
>
> US: Too well thought out. Or in not the most useful way.
>
> MX: That's probable. It's probable that you are right. It's probable that the altruism and the generosity, the emerging vision of the moment was such that we were not sufficiently pragmatic in making decisions [. . .] (MX, III-58)

Thus, it appears that participants avoided conflict by letting the positive preferences of involved actors carry the day, even if these reflected predominately bilateral interests. Unfortunately, this had the added effect of allowing most activity to traverse well-known or traditional paths. Creative innovations like NADERN, North American Studies, and even the less creative but logically appropriate language proficiency agenda item did not generate the support and commitment needed to move them past disagreement.

In response to the difficulty of trilateral action, countries or institutions sometimes acted unilaterally to implement ideas themselves, in other words unilaterally as a country for their own

benefit. This was the case when through government and institutional cooperation, SEP-UNAM Trust 6140 was established and endowed to develop distance education capacity for public institutions of higher education in Mexico. A fund in excess of $10 million (US) was set aside to train university staff and to purchase equipment needed in the universities. This helped to insure that for Mexico, an outcome of NAHEC was the development of a human resource and institutional infrastructure for Internet connectivity that facilitated development of critically needed distance education programs.

Exogenous vs. Endogenous Orientation

The research model used here would have researchers consider several actor preferences issues that can be subsumed as one larger question: whether actions, identities, and habits of participants reflect an exogenous or endogenous orientation. What this distinction asks is whether participants in an international collaborative 1) act on a predetermined agenda or allow unanticipated actions to emerge as possibilities; 2) whether they steadfastly define themselves from within existing national cultural identities or develop social identities for interaction with others; and 3) whether successful actors' propensity to learn allows them to think outside of old frames in order develop options to habits conditioned by prior experience.

"Because I was not able to participate as an observer in face-to-face interactions of participants in this international collaborative, it is difficult to address the question of corporate or social identities. Likewise, individual psychological and historical profiles would be needed to identify what conditioning of participants resulted in which habits, in order to see if these changed in collaboration. The only remaining way to comment on exogenous and endogenous orientations is to consider whether interests of participants could best be characterized as fixed or

evolving. Individual countries' interests for NAHEC as well as incidents from which these can be inferred are described below to consider whether interests of participants in NAHEC can be characterized as having been fixed or evolving.

Mexican interests

One of the recent U. S. appointees to the North American Higher Education Cooperation (NAHEC) Task Force reflected on Mexico's priorities for cooperation in comparison to those of Canada and the United States:

> US: I think from the point of view of the Mexicans, my perception is that their highest priority is to develop their institutional infrastructure, specifically their human resources. And to essentially expand the capacity of postsecondary education. I thir.k that's their top priority. I think from the point of view of the Canadians, my sense [. . . .] is that their priority is to reduce their isolation, essentially. My sense of the Canadians is that they want to join forces to be more visible, to be better known in the United States and in Mexico, but particularly in the U.S., [. . . .] And from the U. S. point of view, I guess I see this as sort of maybe almost an economic development, or economic workforce development kind of drive on peoples' thinking-- [. . . .] that our people, our education system hasn't really developed our people in such a way as to make them very effective or adaptable in international settings. So I think, as I talk to people, the work force development issue seems to be more prominent there than any other factor. (US, IV-104 through IV-106)

This speaker's comments reflect an awareness of two key Mexican priorities for higher education in NAHEC: human resource development and institutional learning/change. One Mexican participant affirmed the Mexican priorities for human resource development even as he compared it to the priorities of other countries. His description carefully differentiates Mexican from U. S. interests even when those are enacted in the one strategy of student exchange.

> MX: . . . priorities in exchange have to do with the international priority. For Mexico, the more important priority of exchange is not an international student.

Me: What is it, then?

MX: The development of faculty.

Me: Ah, the formation of faculty. And for us it isn't, right?

MX: Not for you. Because of the total number of faculty with graduate training in our educational structure, of the one hundred per cent (100%) in the profession, only thirty per cent (30%) have graduate study. You are way above seventy-five percent (75%). For you this is not a problem. Am I being clear?

> If there was interest it would be to develop research in some area. But what was a priority for American colleagues in U.S. institutions was the mobility of students because the [average] U. S. student is not very, doesn't have a very international vision. (MX, IV-81)

Thus, for Mexicans international student exchange was not a goal in and of itself, but a strategy for meeting a national need--in this case for faculty development. This is more explicitly stated by another Mexican participant who said that their agency's interest was "using international collaboration as an instrument to more quickly meet national goals" (MX, IV-44). That participant's agency goals were described as having to do with human resource development, with forging stronger linkages between the production of knowledge and its application, and with steadily increasing the resources available for these activities (MX, IV-44). In keeping with the second of this agency's goals, the NAHEC initiative became a reason for and the means through which a new structure to link universities with the business and industrial sectors was created. Mexico established the Centro de Nuevas Estrategias Tecnológicas (Center for New Technology Strategies/CENET) (CN, VII-39) as a counterpart to similar institutions in the United States and Canada (CN, IV-71).

Despite the creation of CENET, the development of university-business linkages was not

viewed by Task Force members as a primary Mexican goal. The fact that the proposed North American Corporate Higher Education Council first appeared on the NAHEC agenda after the Vancouver meeting, that Canadians were prime movers (through consultants from the Canadian Corporate-Higher Education Council) in the development of CENET, and that a Canadian participant with whom I spoke volunteered information and was generally aware about CENET (CN, II-173) indicates that the business-higher education linkage was primarily a Canadian interest. The earlier discussion of embedded spillover from Steering Committee member agency responsibilities (for Canada, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade) reinforces this view. In light of this, it is interesting to note that some Mexican NAHEC Task Force members did not see the increased emphasis on business as addressing primary NAHEC goals. One participant even saw the increased attention to business as an externally-driven shift away from those Mexican interests that had been negotiated into and reflected in founding NAHEC policy documents.

> MX: . . . by '93 we find ourselves at the Vancouver meeting. There was a strong insistence on linking business, academic (above all), and governmental sectors. And the Vancouver meeting was prepared along those lines with the topics which we have discussed, but making the effort for a very strong interaction.
>
> Me: Where does the, . . . where does the interest come from between Wingspread and Vancouver to link business?
>
> MX: Fundamentally from a vision that the governments had (most of all the U. S. but also the Canadian) that they would not be able to give important support to achieving trilateral efforts especially vis-à-vis businesses, and that from there major support for those efforts could be achieved. In Mexico's case we discussed philanthropic activities and that the linkage between universities with business was much more precarious, much more recent, much weaker as a result than in the case of the United States and Canada. (MX, I-19)

Thus, the evolving business focus addressed predominately Canadian and perhaps U. S. interests, but was not viewed by Mexican Task Force members as their own.

A second major Mexican interest is the construction of NAHEC as a medium for "learning" about other countries' higher education practices in order to incorporate them into Mexican higher education. This responded to critiques in the Coombes report (Bienayme et al., 1992) by identifying innovations and encouraging changes that addresed them. At the same time, they were not inconsistent with Mexico's effort to promote access, quality, and relevance (SEP, 1996) in Mexican higher education.

> MX: It is more practical for an institution to learn how to improve its linkages with the productive sector of their communities through their relation with another American or Canadian university that does and is socially recognized for it, than through a governmental or [higher education] association goal that you must improve your practices of linkage with the productive sector.
>
> Me: Yes. [. . . .] It seems that in your comments two things stand out: the fact that in this initiative you try to increase exchange relations, relations among universities and another that has more to do, I think, with [. . .] providing universities with a kind of technical assistance so that
>
> MX: To support the dynamics of change. Support its dynamic of change with respect to quality without neglecting two aspects that are priority for Mexican higher education: access and relevance. (MX, IV-75)

That learning occurred in Mexican higher education as a result of initiative is reflected in several NAHEC outcomes. The UNAM, for example, quickly recognized the lack of institutional knowledge and research on Canada and established an impressive extension teaching center in Hull, Quebec, to ensure closer two-way cultural interaction (MX, IV-23). Prior to that and on the heels of the Wingspread meeting, they had already renamed and reoriented their Center for U. S. Studies to the Center for North American Studies in order to be

more inclusive of Canadian issues. In other agencies, the relation between internationalization and learning was so clear and key to their interests that goals were entirely reoriented to the international domain.

> MX: All of the work of [the agency]--teaching, research, planning, regional work--all, all of it is now a function of or articulated by the international. Am I clear? How can one strengthen these functions through internationalization? (MX, IV-93)

In summary, Mexican goals for NAHEC centered around human resource development, especially of faculty, and on the use of internationalization as a medium for learning and innovation in Mexican higher education.

United States Interests

The Mexican view of U. S. interests is that they were primarily about getting foreign students to attend universities there.

> MX: Well, what they wanted to do was to attract students, basically. [. . .] They didn't really want to pursue anything beyond recruiting.
>
> Me: So they viewed it as an extension of maybe incipient programs (phone rings) in international exchange or something?
>
> MX: Yes. Exactly. Continuing education. A few of them had moneymaker programs that . . . some of them flew for a while. (MX, I-35)

However, U. S. Task Force participants described NAHEC and their interest in it as having to do with the opportunity to increase understanding, primarily with Mexico.

> US: [. . . .] we're three countries that don't understand each other and we live next to each other. (Short pause) What's worse than that, [. . .] *we* as the country in the middle have a particularly strong bias against our neighbors to the South. And that we have to work through if for no other reason than because it is the *right* thing to do. [. . . .] And so that is why *I* think we need to do this. [. . .] we have to become (pause) [. . .] More ap*pre*ciative. It's not awareness, it's appreciation of. Understanding of and appreciation of, which I think education is key to achieving. So that is the logical place to

start. [. . .]

Me: And you think that our relationship with the Canadians is ok?

US: (Emphatically) Yes. Basically. I don't think it's as serious a problem and the fact that that sort of has became a part of this, is nice. But it wasn't where we started. (US, III-22 and III-26)

Another U. S. Task Force member also believed that more could be done to increase not only tolerance but the appreciation of cultural difference in the United States. That person linked NAHEC work to the appreciation of difference within the United States, and generally related international education activities to those efforts. From this particularly U. S. perspective, it was believed that diversifying academic preparation programs (primarily undergraduate ones) would ensure that students in the United States would develop new "cultural" skills and become less parochial in their view of the world.

US: So, I think it's not only about diversity within the population itself--the demographics--but also a much greater interest in sending students on coops to Europe or to Mexico and so on. [. . . .] Our students are going all over the world now on coops and internships sponsored by businesses and industries. And so, that awareness I think is beginning to sink in to, to just a lot of things that we do. You don't talk to a Business Dean any more who's not thinking internationally. So, I just think that we've begun to see it in typical, sort of U. S. utilitarian terms. (US, I-70)

Nevertheless, these micro-level U. S. interests did not appear to have been promoted within the country. To do so would have involved impacting U. S. universities' core teaching functions and could not have proceeded without first questioning them. This explains and perhaps reinforces the Mexican perception that the chief U. S. objective in NAHEC was foreign student recruitment and exchange.

But there may have been anoher reason that the micro-level U. S. interests expressed above also did not rise in importance. The NAHEC was conceived and directed for the U. S.

from a lead agency (USIA) primarily responsible for exchange and the education of 'foreign' rather than 'native' students. As a U. S. participant put it,

> US: The way I generally describe our [U. S.] responsibility is that [the Department of Education] was responsible for internationalizing Americans and USIA was responsible for Americanizing internationals. But as we get into trilateral or North American contexts, and we are trying to break down those we-they concepts, then obviously we have to work really closely together. Because what normally would have been [DOE] responsibility and what would have been [USIA], are now part of our partnership. (US, III-9)

Thus, as already discussed elsewhere, the USIA agency role within higher education in the United States influenced a particular way of looking at NAHEC action domains within the U. S. That emphasis on primarily foreign students and in research and educational exchanges might have been different if the Department of Education had been the lead U. S. agency.

Canadian Interests

The Canadian interest in university-business linkages has already been discussed. In an earlier section, I also referenced Canada's Foreign Policy Review, a policy document that included a recommendation that education be used to create a Canadian presence abroad.

Given that U. S. interest in developing closer ties to Mexico was a compelling reason for the engaging in NAHEC, the United States was surprised by Mexico-Canada affinities that sometimes unintentionally got in the way or impeded improved U. S.-Mexico relations. For example, one thing that Mexico and Canada had in common was understanding what it means to interact in bilateral relations with the larger, more powerful United States. While this made the U. S. familiar to both of them in a particular, shared way, both discovered that they did not know as much about each other. Thus, for Canada as for Mexico,the NAHEC was an opportunity to learn about the country on the other side of a behemoth United States.

> CN: I mean, the U. S. has extensive relations with Canada. And it *has* extensive relations with Mexico at the institution level, the education level. Because it is in the middle, because it is a magnet for . . . and so on. And the two that really . . . Mexico and ourselves have an intensive relationship with the U. S., but we didn't have one [. . . .] across. And so there has to be a different perspective on the U. S. side, and I think understandably so. Also, I don't think the U. S. is interested in a North American community, terribly. The U. S. doesn't mind if people become, if everyone becomes Americanized. But not a sense of community where you're different. And [there are] people who speak quite eloquently about that who are Americans (CN, I-91).

All of this highlights that interests of actors within the three countries were initially disparate and did not, in this short time period, become transformed into integrative joint interests.

In short, Mexico was fundamentally interested in human resource development and organizational change and saw the internationalization of higher education there as a *strategy* for achieving those goals. Canadians initially wanted simply to be included in the developing closer ties between Mexico and the United States, then used the collaborative to promote lead agency (DFAIT) goals. These included promoting greater attention to meeting the needs of business. At the micro level of Task Force participants, the United States was interested in promoting greater understanding of diverse communities. This included minority communities in and outside of the United States, primarily Mexico. However, this micro U. S. interest did not appear to be enacted through macro level actions.

Thus, a look at the "Actor Preferences" features of the NAHEC initiative tells us that the NAHEC had macro and micro orientations--a macro-level Steering Committee centered on providing policy direction and a micro-level Task Force that provided input and a foundation for implementation--and that micro-level Task Force members exceeded their assigned role by providing policy input and by expanding expectations for action. The implementation of

identified projects was constructed by macro-level dimensions like the national structure of higher education and the implementation strategy chosen by macro Steering Committee participants; Mexico and Canada reflected more similar actor preferences when these two dimensions are used to analyze NAHEC implementation in the three countries; and Mexican Task Force frustrations and confusion about others' different ways of work can be substantially explained by incongruent implementations. And finally, despite beginnings that promised otherwise, participant comments reflect the prevalence of fixed rather than evolving interests.

Conclusion

The North American Higher Education Cooperation (NAHEC) initiative is an example of the cross-national educational cooperation that the U.S., Mexico, and Canada only recently have initiated and begun to develop. As highlighted by this research, those involved in international collaboration projects bring significantly different ideas about role, values, and about national and international priorities to this work. These are enacted in the varying ways that participants construct--individually and with others--the *organization*, *process*, and *actor preferences* zones in international collaboratives like NAHEC. Thus, educators cannot assume that colleagues from other countries operate with the same social and educational values and assumptions, or even from a similar ordering of domestic priorities, including educational ones. In order for the growing number of Mexico-Canada-U. S. higher education collaboratives to be enacted successfully, we would all be well served to consider and attempt to understand collaborative goals from within the perspectives of colleagues from other nations as well as from our own. There remains much to be learned if educators from all of North America are to participate fully in the social, cultural, and economic transformations to which the region is subject.

Notes

1. An outgrowth of these and related collaboration initiatives is the Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC) which serves as a clearinghouse for information on tri-lateral institutional linkages and tri-lateral cooperation. For additional information on the CONAHEC consortium, see "http://www.wiche.edu/conahec/index.htm".

2. For a list of Steering Committee (macro) and Task Force (micro) participants from each country during 1992-1996, see Appendix A and Appendix B.

3.An extensive description of the theoretical grounding for this three-zone model is forthcoming as "Zones of Influence in North American Higher Education Cooperation." (Oliva, 1998b).

4. Ellipses in the text of interviews are used to indicate pauses or that the next statement does not follow immediately on the preceding. Ellipses in brackets [. . .] indicate that some of the interview text has been deleted. This is usually done to follow a thought that gets dropped then picked up again after other things are discussed. Ellipses in quotes from written documents follow accepted conventions for written text.

5. I take this to mean that exchange is attractive to Mexico because they want Mexican students to do graduate work abroad and would also like to see more foreign students in Mexico. In contrast, U. S. institutions already enroll many foreign students and are not pressed to obtain more. They do not have an expectation of enough new Mexican foreign student enrollment from a special initiative to make an effort directed at Mexico worthwhile.

6. Interviews with Mexican participants were often conducted in Spanish, then translated by the author for this report of the research. When this occurred in the original research (Oliva, 1997), the Spanish-language text (from documents as well as from interviews) was provided in an appendix. Given space limitations, such an appendix is not provided here.

7. Participants are impressive scholars or academic administrators and well-respected in their countries. However, this statement should be taken to indicate that their involvement in the initiative had an administrative and entrepreneurial rather than intellectual focus and emphasis.

8. These included the newly formed Asociación Mexicana Para la Educación Internacional (AMPEI) organization for international education administrators in Mexico which held annual meetings; the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) and the Asociación Mexicana Para la Educación Internacional (AMPEI) that together coordinated several U. S.-Mexico Educational Leadership Seminars; and the North American Institute (NAMI), an independent organization created in part by Canadian Morris Strong that met to discuss academic topics like 'History and National Identity' in North America.

9. The topics they had in mind included the need to work on exchange of information/database, mobility, optimizing complementarities, and mutual understanding and cultural identity.

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Appendix A

Steering Committee Membership 1992-1996

	December 1992[1]	April 1994[2]	December 1996[3]
Mexico	Victor Arredondo Álvarez Director General, Higher Education and Research[4]	Victor Arredondo Álvarez Director General, Higher Education and Research	Victor Arredondo Álvarez Director General, Higher Education and Research
United States	Leonard A. Haynes, III Director, Office of Academic Programs[5]	Thomas E. E. Spooner Acting Director, USIA Office of Academic Programs	Dell Pendergrast Associate Director, USIA Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
Canada	Alain Dudoit Director General, International Cultural Relations Bureau[6]	Alain Dudoit Director General, International Cultural Relations Bureau	Robin Higham Director General, International Cultural Relations Bureau

[1]These individuals are listed as founding Trilateral Steering Committee members on pages 27-28 of the Johnson Foundation's 1993 post-Wingspread meeting report called North American Higher Education Cooperation: Identifying the Agenda. An effective date of December 1992 is given here for this Steering Committee because by then the initiative, subsequent to educator approval at Wingspread, had been officially established.

[2]These individuals are listed as Steering Committee members on pages 98-99 of the Steering Committee's 1994 post-Vancouver meeting report called North American Higher Education Cooperation: Implementing the Agenda.

[3]Immediately before the Guadalajara meeting in April 1996, these individuals were listed as Coordinating Committee (their term for Steering Committee members) in the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education's EL-NET (Educational Leadership Network), the official electronic information clearinghouse for North American higher education cooperation. The electronic network can be found at "http://www.wiche.edu/elnet/guadnet/hola.htm". During data collection in December 1996 and spring 1997, I confirmed that no changes in membership were subsequently made.

[4]Of the Secretaría de Educación Pública, Mexico's Ministry of Education.

[5]Of the United States Information Agency (USIA).

[6]Of External Affairs and International Trade Canada.

Appendix B
Trilateral Task Force Membership 1992-1996

Mexico

	December 1992[1]	April 1994[2]	December 1996[3]
1	Salvador Malo Álvarez, Chair Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)	Continues	Continues
2	Fausto Alzati Araiza Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONACYT)	Eduardo Andere Martínez CONACYT	Carlos Bazdresch Parada CONACYT
3	Rafael Rangel Sostman Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM)	Continues	Continues
4	Carlos Pallán Figueroa Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior (ANUIES)	Continues	Continues
5	Jorge A. Bustamante El Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF)	Continues	Continues
6	Julio Gutiérrez Trujillo Grupo Condumex	Gone and not replaced	

[1]These individuals are listed as founding Trilateral Task Force members on page 26 of the Johnson Foundation's 1993 post-Wingspread meeting report called North American Higher Education Cooperation: Identifying the Agenda.

[2]These individuals are listed as Task Force members on pages 98-99 of the Steering Committee's 1994 post-Vancouver meeting report called North American Higher Education Cooperation: Implementing the Agenda.

[3]These individuals were listed as Task Force members in the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education's EL-NET (Educational Leadership Network), the official electronic information clearinghouse for North American higher education cooperation. The electronic network can be found at "http://www.wiche.edu/elnet/guadnet/hola.htm".The listing was reviewed prior to the April 1996 Guadalajara meeting. During data collection in December 1996 and spring 1997, I confirmed that no changes in membership were subsequently made.

United States

	December 1992	April 1994	December 1996
1	Lois B. Defleur, Chair State University of New York at Binghamton Binghamton, New York	Continues	David A. Longanecker Department of Education Washington, D. C.
2	Robert H. Atwell American Council on Education Washington, D. C.	Continues	Continues
3	William P. Hobby Texas Legislature/Rice University Austin, Texas	Continues	Naomi Collins National Association for Foreign Student Affairs Washington, D. C.
4	Richard M. Krasno Institute of International Education New York, New York	Continues	Continues
5	William H. Mobley Texas A & M University College Station, Texas	Continues	Diana S. Natalicio The University of Texas at El Paso El Paso, Texas
6	Niara Sudarkasa Lincoln University Lincoln, Pennsylvania	Continues	Continues

Canada

	December 1992	April 1994	December 1996
1	Douglas Wright, Chair University of Waterloo Waterloo, Ontario	Continues	Continues
2	Marie-Josée Drouin Institut Hudson Montréal, Quebec	Continues	Robert J. Giroux Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada Ottawa, Ontario
3	Clarence J. Chandran Northern Telecom Corporation Miami Lakes, Florida	Continues	Continues
4	Claire McNicoll Universite de Montréal Montréal, Quebec	Continues	Continues
5	Donald Rickerd Max Bell Foundation Toronto, Ontario	Continues	Continues
6	Thomas Wood Mount Royal College Calgary, Alberta	Continues	Continues